

CONGRATULATIONS TO EDINA  
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' TENNIS  
CHAMPS!

### HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commend the Edina High School girls' tennis team on their 2014 Minnesota State Championship.

The Edina Hornets clinched the state tennis team title with a strong performance top to bottom in their 6–1 victory over Prior Lake. Senior Caitlyn Merzbacher and Freshman Sophia Reddy led the way in Singles play, but it took a complete team effort to take home the title.

Credit goes to Coach Steve Paulsen, who now can now count this as his 19th state title, including 18 in a row. With such a consecutive title streak on the line, it's easy to see these Edina athletes have no problem coping with pressure.

Tennis is a game with tremendous ups and downs that takes focus, mental toughness, and an ability to overcome mistakes. Edina's success is a testament to the time spent day after day honing those skills.

What makes it even more impressive is that these Hornet athletes are able to thrive at their sport while still meeting their academic, family, and social commitments. Family and friends should be tremendously proud of what these girls have accomplished.

It is my pleasure to honor and congratulate the Edina High School girls' tennis team on bringing home another state title!

IN HONOR OF SHIRLEY  
MCDOWELL'S CAREER

### HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Shirley McDowell of Concord, North Carolina for her faithful work as Executive Director at Hospice and Palliative Care of Cabarrus County. Upon retiring she will have served 28 years building a team of caregivers that have served our community during times when families have confronted terminal illness.

Under Shirley's leadership, Cabarrus County's Hospice service has grown into a strong program that effectively helps those in need. She guided this program through all of the changes in healthcare over the years and directed Hospice through acquisition of land for a permanent building and the construction of the Tucker Hospice House in Kannapolis.

The impact that Shirley has had on our community is profound, and we are grateful for her commitment to help those in need. I am proud to represent Shirley McDowell and we are thankful for her years of service.

HONORING ISAAC PALMER

### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable person, Mr. Isaac Palmer.

Mr. Isaac Palmer was born on May 23, 1914 in Sharkey County, Mississippi, the oldest of nine children born to the late Reverend Littleton and Frances Nathaniel Palmer. Mr. Palmer was married to the late Vera Lee Bell Palmer for over 50 years. He has eight children: Betty, Geraldine, Odell, Isaac Lavelle, Nina, Patricia, David (deceased) and Fred (deceased).

Mr. Palmer wanted to attend school badly; but, he had to leave school when he was twelve years old, in the 6th grade, to work on the farm and help provide for his younger sisters and brothers. However, he didn't let this stop him. He learned to read, write and speak more fluently by studying the Holy Bible. Mr. Palmer was a "jack of all trades", doing things like driving tractors, farming, welding and being a mechanic, just to name a few.

At an early age, Mr. Palmer accepted Christ as his Savior. He was an active member of New Hope Baptist Church in Blanton, Mississippi, where he served as Senior Deacon and Superintendent of the Sunday school for many years. During this time, he led many children, friends and acquaintances to Christ. He has been and remains a laborer for Christ for more than 85 years.

Though Mr. Palmer only had a 6th grade education, he remains passionate about helping and encouraging his children and other young people to get as much education as possible. To help out, he would drive his own children to and from Alcorn and Jackson State Universities, as well as their friends who lived in the area (free of charge), after working all day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Isaac Palmer for his dedication to serving and giving back to his family and community.

HONORING JOE GERGELA

### HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Joe Gergela, who will retire at the end of this year from his position as the Long Island Farm Bureau's Executive Director, a position he has held for 26 years.

Joe's highly effective advocacy for Long Island agriculture was first cultivated early in his life, harvesting potatoes and other vegetables with his father and grandfather. He came to know the satisfaction of a hard day's work and the vital role family plays in a working farm, which form the backbone of the economy and tradition of Long Island's East End. In doing so, Joe celebrated the rich agricultural heritage that has been the pride of eastern Long Island since the 1600s. But he also learned the struggles farming families face, which strengthened his resolve to fight for our farm-

ing communities as the leader and chief advocate of the Long Island Farm Bureau.

At the helm of the Farm Bureau, Joe has worked tirelessly for the over 600 farms covering nearly 36,000 acres of land in Suffolk County, in which my district lies, and the thousands of acres of farmland in adjacent Nassau County. During my tenure in Congress, Joe has been a trusted and valued counsel upon whom I have relied for expert knowledge of agricultural and environmental policy. I enjoyed my regular visits that Joe coordinated for me with board members of the Long Island Farm Bureau that became known as "coffee with the congressman," which I found to be invaluable forums. These annual coffee meetings gave me the opportunity to hear directly from East End farmers who imparted firsthand accounts of their success and challenges with issues relating to water quality, open space preservation, the Farm Bill, immigration reform and access to affordable labor, and how we could work together to maintain Long Island's robust agricultural footprint.

Joe has been an invaluable resource to my staff and me, providing real life knowledge about working farms but also helpful insight on public policy. He has helped my office build meaningful relationships with the agriculture community and has always been ready to assist when there were opportunities to work together. Most recently, Joe helped coordinate a visit to Long Island for the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, to focus USDA's attention on our land, wineries, farm stands, related small businesses, and the hard-working Long Islanders behind these successful, growing ventures.

Mr. Speaker, I have been proud to call Joe a friend and colleague for many years now. I know there will be many farmers, small businesses, and Suffolk County residents who will miss his tenacious dedication to farming and farmers on Long Island. On behalf of New York's First Congressional District, I congratulate Joe on his years of outstanding service and his many accomplishments with the Long Island Farm Bureau, and I wish him well in retirement and his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE SIXTH ANNUAL  
CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

### HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 10, 2014*

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, on December 20, 2014, Brevard County families, businesses and local community organizations will gather together to celebrate the Sixth Annual Christmas Extravaganza. This wonderful event, which will take place at the Max K. Rodes Park in West Melbourne, will provide an uplifting message of hope during this Christmas season as so many families are still facing difficult challenges.

The House at Palm Bay, Brevard County Parks & Recreation and their business partners have recognized the importance of providing a positive venue for residents and children to celebrate Christmas.

What makes the Christmas Extravaganza so special is that there is no cost to attend—everything is absolutely free to the public. From cotton candy and hot dogs, to live music performed by the Bay West Church Band, and